



Department of Homeland Security Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 18 March 2008

Current Nationwide



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- According to the WRIC 8 Richmond, reports of a bomb on an Amtrak train in Emporia, Virginia, forced hundreds of people onboard to evacuate. A number of streets were shut down overnight around where the Amtrak train stopped in the middle of town. The nearly 300 passengers on board the train bound from New York down to Florida were forced to evacuate after a man on board said he had a bomb. (See item [17](#))
- The Daily Item reports the mayor of Peabody, Massachusetts, and the Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC) announced the completion of the “Southern Essex Regional Area Planning Council” daylong tabletop exercise drill hosted by Peabody on Thursday morning. The drill, moderated by Precision Planning and Simulations, Inc., was designed to help determine the North Shore’s ability to respond to hypothetical terrorist attacks by exploring key emergency response roles and communications protocols. (See item [34](#))

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report Fast Jump

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Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: **Physical: ELEVATED, Cyber: ELEVATED**

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://www.esisac.com>]

1. *March 17, Associated Press* – (Ohio) **Moratorium on utility shutoffs ending**. Low-income Ohioans have been protected against having their natural gas or electricity shut

off this winter, but the state's moratorium will come to an end on Tuesday. People threatened with having their utilities disconnected may turn to a couple of seasonal programs that regulators are extending. Both were to end for the year on April 15 but will go to April 30. One program provides an emergency benefit to consumers who have received a disconnect notice. The other allows Ohioans to pay just \$175 to avoid losing service or be reconnected, regardless of how much is owed to the utility. The 90-day moratorium on shutoffs was prompted by a fire in Toledo at a home being lit by candles. Source:

<http://www.coshoctontribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080317/UPDATES01/80317015/1002/NEWS01>

2. *March 17, Platts* – (International) **Crude futures up on U.S. rate cut, amid turmoil in other markets.** Crude futures moved higher in European late-morning trading Monday as financial markets around the world reacted sharply, and variously, to Sunday's emergency interest rate cut by the U.S. Federal Reserve. In early Asian trading, the fall of the dollar to yet more lows against other currencies prompted buyers to push New York Mercantile Exchange light sweet crude to another all-time high trade of \$111.80/barrel. The contract then retreated slightly. "Essentially this is driven by the U.S. interest rate cut," a London-based trader said. The U.S. Federal Reserve cut its primary credit rate by a quarter-point to 3.25 percent Sunday. The dollar fell to as low as Yen 96.57 when markets opened for trade in Asia Monday. The U.S. Dollar Index opened below 71 points, an all-time low. "The oil fundamentals have been clearly pushed into backstage," Petromatrix wrote in a report. "Hence the front stage will feature this coming week the Fed as the main performing show. A 75 [basis point cut] is now fully expected and expectations are starting to increase for a full percent cut."

Source:

<http://www.platts.com/Oil/News/8594184.xml?sub=Oil&p=Oil/News&?undefined&undefined>

3. *March 17, FireFightingNews.com*– (Nevada) **Ethanol fuels firefighting dilemma.** On average, 1.2 million gallons of ethanol, about two or three tankers a day, are brought into Las Vegas every month, primarily via railroad. If there were an accident and one of those tankers caught fire as it was traveling through the city, the Las Vegas Fire Department would not be able to handle it alone because it does not use the alcohol-resistant foam that is effective against an ethanol fire. "There has not been a need for it in the past," a Fire Department spokesman said. "But we're going to change over." Fire officials are still deciding which brand of foam to buy and whether they will need to equip all of their trucks with the new foam. Additional costs could include new training for the firefighters. Fire officials will make a decision on what changes to make as soon as they have considered their options fully. Until then, firefighters might not be able to put out an alcohol-based fire as quickly. The city can get help from the Clark County Fire Department, which has been using alcohol-resistant foam for years. The department also has access to additional firefighting resources from Nellis Air Force Base and McCarran International Airport. The best the Fire Department could do is to try to contain the fire and wait for it to burn itself out, said an executive assistant at the International Association of Fire Fighters.

Source: <http://www.firefightingnews.com/article-US.cfm?articleID=46718>

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Chemical Industry Sector

4. *March 17, Industrial Info Resources* – (National) **Plant closures in 2007 remain low supporting the positive outlook for the chemical processing industry.** In the 21st century, the number of annual plant closures in the Chemical Processing Industry (CPI) has been fairly constant. Looking at the years 2000 to 2006 using Industrial Info's North American Plant Database, the number of CPI plant closures peaked in 2001 with 164 closings and hit a low with 83 in 2004. The totals steadily rose during this period until 2007 when Industrial Info tracked a mere 52 plants that had permanently closed their doors. For details, view the entire article by subscribing to Industrial Info's Premium Industry News at: www.industrialinfo.com/showNews.jsp?newsitemID=129691. Source: <http://biz.yahoo.com/iw/080317/0375386.html>
5. *March 17, KIII 3 South Texas* – (Texas) **Emergency crews respond to reports of a cloud, foul odor.** There were tense moments over on the Corpus Christi's Northwest side, Texas, after reports of a chemical explosion. It happened a little after 3 on Sunday, at Leopard and Lantana when emergency crews got a call concerning a chemical explosion. Authorities blocked off a 500 foot radius around AOC Welding Supply. Officials say a 150 pound chlorine tank was the source of that explosion that released a yellowish smoke cloud and chlorine smell into the air. One person who walked through that chemical cloud was taken to the hospital. Officials are now investigating how the tank failed, and will determine if any citations will be given out. Source: <http://www.kiiitv.com/news/local/16717811.html>
6. *March 17, Chemical & Engineering News* – (National) **OSHA targets chemical plants.** Beginning this year, chemical companies will receive a battery of complex "process safety management" (PSM) inspections conducted by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, says the director of OSHA enforcement programs. The inspections will focus on management and operation of chemical manufacturing processes, which are the primary cause of large chemical accidents. Like the processes, the inspections are complex, the official notes, and will be similar to those of an OSHA inspection program for refineries, which began last June. OSHA has been urged to conduct more frequent PSM inspections by the Chemical Safety & Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) following a fatal 2005 refinery accident in Texas. CSB noted that over a decade, OSHA conducted only four PSM inspections at chemical plants and none at refineries. The new chemical and refinery inspections are OSHA "national emphasis programs," he says. There are 28,000 chemical plants under OSHA jurisdiction, the official says, and the agency is just now determining how many plants it can inspect. OSHA has about 1,000 inspectors, and 330 are being trained for the refinery program. These same inspectors and more will be trained for the chemical plant program, he says. Source: <http://pubs.acs.org/cen/news/86/i11/8611notw3.html>

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Nuclear Reactors, Materials, and Waste Sector

7. *March 17, Olympian* – (Washington) **Whistleblower Act offers retaliation protection.** The Washington State Senate Bill 6776 from the legislative session that ended last week passed. Long sought by workers in environmental agencies such as the Department of Ecology, this rewrite of the Whistleblower Act says that a state worker can report suppression of scientific findings with impunity from management retaliation. The bill states that suppressing a scientific opinion or technical finding without a scientifically valid justification is an improper governmental action, but agencies can choose from differing staff opinions. It also adds “gross mismanagement” as an improper governmental action, and defines the term as actions that grossly deviate from the standard of care a reasonable person would expect.

Source: <http://www.theolympian.com/stateworkers/story/391010.html>

8. *March 17, Arizona State University Web Devil* – (Arizona) **ASU models to help fix nuclear plant problems.** Arizona State University (ASU) researchers are putting the finishing touches on a large-scale nuclear reactor model at the Tempe campus. The model is part of a project to help Arizona Public Service Co. (APS) figure out a phenomenon that has been occurring in the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station’s reactors. An APS spokesman said the three Palo Verde units are refueled every 18 months, but near the end of refueling cycle, there are pressure fluctuations in part of the reactor’s cooling system. The director of the ASU project said the Palo Verde reactors need to be investigated because the fluctuations could be causing an issue related to power production called “pre-trips.” The engineers hope to determine what is setting off pre-trips, or alarms, which are designed to alert the operators to get involved in monitoring power production. “This is a nuisance to the operators, and Palo Verde engineers are concerned that this may even lead to trips that shut down the plant – causing huge economic impacts,” the professor said. The fluctuations do not pose safety issues, only production issues. “We can extrapolate the measurements taken from the model to the real situations,” he said. “This will help APS engineers to make a decision on how to avoid pre-trips.” ASU plans to finish constructing the model by the end of March. Testing on the model will then last for about two months.

Source: <http://www.asuwebdevil.com/issues/2008/03/17/news/704134>

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Defense Industrial Base Sector

9. *March 17, Aviation Week* – (National) **Executive branch strikes VH-71 deal.** Defense officials formally announced March 14 that the White House and Defense Department have agreed to a plan that maintains two VH-71 presidential helicopter replacement program increments, although the White House also has made “compromises” on Increment 1 requirements “to help with cost and schedule issues.” Total program cost has grown from \$6.8 billion to \$11.2 billion, with Increment 1 rising from \$2.3 billion to \$3.7 billion and Increment 2 jumping from \$4.5 billion to \$7.5 billion. “Because of cost growth issues and congressional funding cuts,” Increment 2 also is under a stop work

order, officials said. “The Navy and industry team did not clearly realize the full implications of the White House requirements,” the Pentagon’s acquisition chief said, noting that the program sought to rely on existing helos that were modestly modified. “These issues were further complicated by the enforcement of Navy certification requirements on a helicopter designed to commercial aviation standards,” he said. Now, the Navy and industry teams will complete a “substantial” redesign of the EH-101 base helo to meet Increment 2 requirements.

Source:

http://www.aviationweek.com/aw/generic/story_generic.jsp?channel=aerospacedaily&id=news/VH71031708.xml&headline=Executive%20Branch%20Strikes%20VH-71%20Deal

10. *March 16, Strategy Page* – (National) **Bushmaster gets smart shell.** An automatic, laser controlled airburst shell has been developed for the Mk44 30mm Bushmaster automatic cannon. The new airburst option uses a dual loading system, so the gunner need only flip a switch to select the airburst ammo, or other ammo (either armor piercing, or “dumb” explosive shells). The smart shells require the gunner to use the laser range finder – built into the fire control system – to select the range at which the smart shells will explode. The laser guided shells can penetrate up to eight inches of concrete and still detonate on the other side. A few rounds can be fired through a window, where the shells will explode, providing the same effect as throwing a grenade into a room. The new airburst round has been undergoing field tests for over a year, and the U.S. Army and Marine Corps are planning to install it in their new armored vehicles. The U.S. Air Force will upgrade the Mk44 cannon they are already installing in their AC-130 gunships.

Source: <http://www.strategypage.com/htmwtweap/articles/20080316.aspx>

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Banking and Finance Sector

11. *March 17, Springfield News-Leader* – (Missouri) **State warns of scam on unemployment claims.** Missourians checking into unemployment insurance should be wary of a scam involving processing of unemployment insurance claims, according to the offices of a governor and the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. The department warns that that an Internet site, www.unemploymentbenefits.com, which is charging fees ranging from \$3 to \$10 to file a claim, is not associated with the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Consumers are asked to provide a credit or debit card number and a payment is sent to PayPal. Processing of unemployment insurance claims is a free service provided by the Department’s Division of Employment Security. Under Missouri law, workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own and are actively seeking work may be eligible to receive up to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. To file a Missouri unemployment insurance claim, visit www.mocclaim.com.

Source: [http://www.news-](http://www.news-leader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080317/NEWS01/803170362/1007/NEWS01)

[leader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080317/NEWS01/803170362/1007/NEWS01](http://www.news-leader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080317/NEWS01/803170362/1007/NEWS01)

12. *March 17, Online Casino News* – (National) **NETELLER warns of phishing scam.** Online payment processor NETELLER is warning customers of a new spate of criminal phishers using its name and logo. The Isle of Man-based firm stated that many of its customers had received an e-mail from ‘communications@NETELLER’ advising them that the e-processor intended to re-introduce IP tracking from March 31. “This is a security measure to ensure the location of your login matches the country of residence registered with your NETELLER account,” reads the bogus e-mail. The communication then goes on to request that account holders planning an overseas trip away from their home nation register with NETELLER by clicking on a link. This is ostensibly to obtain permission to operate their accounts while away from home as the e-mail claims that if this is not done any foreign transactions will be refused. The link leads to a web page where users are asked to enter their account numbers, names and details, a move that could leave them open to abuse resulting in a loss of funds. Although the e-mail resembles NETELLER’s new corporate image, the firm stated that it is fake and advised account holders not to respond. The e-mail should, instead, be forwarded to ‘phishing@NETELLER.com’ for further investigation.
Source: http://www.onlinecasinonews.com/ocnv2_1/article/article.asp?id=16585
13. *March 16, WCIA-3 Illinois* – (Illinois) **F.E.M.A. warns flood victims about possible phone scam.** Some Watseka, Illinois, flood victims are upset over a scam that could take what little they have left. The scam involves someone calling claiming to be with F.E.M.A. or a relief organization. They then ask for money and personal information. F.E.M.A. officials say the only time they will actually ask for personal banking information is over the phone not even at the disaster relief center. Once they get that info, they will never ask for it again. “If they’re going to be getting some money through grants for their losses, they can either have they’re checks sent to them at their home or they can have it put directly into their bank account.” F.E.M.A. says callers will use intimidation to pressure victims into giving away their personal information. They say if people receive one of these calls and think it is a scheme, they should not hesitate to call the police.
Source: <http://illinoishomepage.net/content/fulltext/?cid=11974>
14. *March 15, Washington Post* – (National) **The anatomy of a vishing scam.** A series of well-orchestrated wireless phone-based phishing attacks against several financial institutions last week illustrates how scam artists are growing more adept at fleecing consumers by exploiting security holes in seemingly unrelated Internet technologies. According to the security forensics professional who was called in to help investigate: the scammers targeted customers of multiple financial institutions, sending the text message lures solely to mobile numbers assigned to customers who lived in the geographic regions served by the individual institutions. For example, one scam targeting Motorola Employees Credit Union was sent only to Cingular mobile numbers assigned to consumers in the Schaumburg, Illinois, area, where Motorola is headquartered. Yet another vishing attack sought Qwest customers in the Boulder region who may have belonged to the Boulder Valley Credit Union. A third vishing attack, against the Bank of the Cascades, produced an unusual response from the institution. The first stop in setting up this vishing volley was the compromise of a Web site called

whitehousechronicles.com. The attackers broke into the site by exploiting an ancient flaw (in Internet time) in Horde, a free Webmail utility. Once there, they installed a bunch of scripts on the Web server; several of the scripts contained millions of provider- and region-specific phone numbers that would receive the vishing messages, while another listed the credentials needed to log into and send e-mail from dozens of outside e-mail servers. The attackers had previously compromised those e-mail servers by hijacking the accounts used to receive “abuse” complaints for those servers. The scammers were able to use those abuse inboxes to blast out spam because the administrators of those servers had failed to select strong passwords for the accounts.

Source:

http://blog.washingtonpost.com/securityfix/2008/03/the_anatomy_of_a_vishing_scam_1.html?nav=rss_blog

15. *March 15, Deseret Morning News* – (Utah) **State agency reports a security breach.**

Computer files containing the personal information of approximately 500 individuals may have been accessed by unauthorized persons during a security breach at the Utah Division of Finance. However, a Department of Administrative Services spokeswoman said in a press release an initial investigation indicates it is highly unlikely the person who breached the computer system was able to access the personal information. As a precautionary measure, the Department of Administrative Services will make every effort to contact all individuals whose personal information was potentially exposed, she said. State computer systems withstand more than 100,000 potential attacks a day, according to the press release. The state encourages individuals to be proactive and visit the IRIS ID Theft information and reporting Web site, www.idtheft.utah.gov, for precautionary information about preventing identity theft.

Source: <http://deseretnews.com/article/1,5143,695261923,00.html>

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Transportation Sector

16. *March 17, USA Today* – (National) **Airlines blast plan to fingerprint foreign fliers.**

Airlines are protesting a government plan that would require them to take fingerprints of foreign travelers as they fly out of the USA, saying it could create massive lines at airport check-in counters. Congress has required that the 33 million foreigners a year coming into U.S. airports be fingerprinted when they arrive and leave the country but did not specify who should take the prints. The Homeland Security Department, which currently fingerprints foreigners coming into U.S. airports, wants airlines to be responsible for taking fingerprints as these travelers leave. The International Air Transport Association (IATA), which represents 240 airlines worldwide, urged the White House to kill the plan. The opposition could derail a key part of the Homeland Security Department’s effort to keep track of foreign visitors including suspected terrorists. An official, who heads the fingerprint program, said fingerprinting foreigners as they leave is essential. The information helps track those whose visas have expired and allows monitoring of people whose movements in and out of the USA suggest terrorist plotting. If approved, the plan would be open to public comment for a few months before the department finalizes it, likely next year.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2008-03-16-fingerprints_N.htm

17. *March 17, WRIC 8 Richmond* – (Virginia) **Bomb threat evacuates hundreds from train in Emporia.** Reports of a bomb on an Amtrak train in Emporia, Virginia, forced hundreds of people onboard to evacuate. A number of streets were shut down overnight around where the Amtrak train stopped in the middle of town. The nearly 300 passengers on board the train bound from New York down to Florida were forced to evacuate after a man on board said he had a bomb. Many of the passengers were children traveling with family to Disney World in Orlando. Investigators told 8News a 23-year-old Yemeni man got into an argument with another man on the train and then yelled that he had a bomb. Around 2 a.m. the bomb squad determined the threat was a hoax. The Yemeni man was taken into custody by the FBI and is facing a felony charge of making a threat on a public conveyance.

Source: <http://www.wric.com/Global/story.asp?S=8023502>

18. *March 16, AVweb* – (Florida) **FAA pressured on flight school probe.** Two Florida congressmen are calling on the Federal Aviation Administration to make its investigation of Lantana-based, Florida, Kemper Aviation a priority. Last Thursday the company owner and three passengers died when their Cessna 172 crashed. It was the third crash of a Kemper aircraft since October and there have been a total of eight deaths. “On its face, with all these accidents, common sense would tell you this company has some problems and something is wrong,” a congressman said. He and another representative have written the agency asking for urgent action on an already existing probe into the company, which suspended operations after Thursday’s crash.

Source:

http://www.avweb.com/avwebflash/news/FAAPressuredOnFlightSchoolProbe_197386-1.html

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Postal and Shipping Sector

Nothing to Report

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Agriculture and Food Sector

19. *March 17, USAgNet* – (International) **Beef ban may impact Korean trade mission.** North Dakota’s Agriculture Commissioner says the success of an upcoming 25-member North Dakota Trade Office mission to South Korea will depend in part on beef. “Congress is holding up passage of the U.S.-Korean Free Trade Agreement until South Korea fully opens its market to U.S. beef imports,” he said, as he left Friday with a North Dakota Trade Office mission to Seoul. “Unless the Koreans lift that ban, it is unlikely the agreement will go through, and that could spell trouble for our commodity sales to South Korea because their soybean and canola tariffs would remain in place.” Citing fears over bovine spongiform encephalopathy, South Korea now bans the import

of U.S. beef, except for boneless meat from cattle younger than 30 months.

Source: <http://www.usagnet.com/story-national.php?Id=658&yr=2008>

20. *March 17, USAgNet* – (National) **Possibly contaminated giblets cause poultry recall.**

Cagle's Inc. of Collinsville, Alabama, is voluntarily recalling approximately 943,000 pounds of various fresh and frozen poultry giblets and fresh carcasses with giblets inserted that may be adulterated due to improper disposition of the giblets, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced. Although the carcasses were condemned, FSIS could not verify that the associated viscera, including the giblets, were condemned and diverted for inedible purposes, and they are therefore adulterated. Each shipping package bears the establishment number 'P-548' inside the USDA mark of inspection, however these products were repackaged for consumer sale and will therefore not include the establishment's number. The products were produced on various dates between December 3, 2007 and March 12, 2008, and were distributed to institutions and restaurants nationwide.

Source: <http://www.wisconsinagconnection.com/story-national.php?Id=650&yr=2008>

21. *March 16, Yakima Herald-Republic* – (Washington) **Thousands of dead birds a shock in Yakima County.**

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Web site, the USDA poisoned thousands of European Starlings at the request of surrounding farmers who wanted to reduce the local population of the small black bird, estimated at 45,000. According to the USDA Web site, the birds have been a nuisance ever since the species was introduced to the U.S. in 1890, destroying fruit crops, spreading livestock disease and pushing native bird species out of their territory. Locally, a starling short-circuited equipment at a Pacific Power substation in Toppenish, Washington, last fall, cutting the power for about 6,000 Lower Valley residents and businesses. An environmental-health specialist with the Yakima Health District, said the USDA did let Yakima County know about the starling poisoning in the area, but was under the impression county officials were going to warn neighbors. He said the USDA conducts poisonings in various locations around the county each spring.

Source:

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2004286277_webstarlings16.html

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Water Sector

22. *March 16, Detroit Free Press* – (National) **Troubles getting deeper for U.S., its fresh water supply.**

It takes a lot of water to produce energy. It takes a lot of energy to provide water. The two are inextricably linked, and claims on each are rising. "The water supply is as critical as oil," said a geologist at the University of Texas in Austin, who is an expert on the problem. In return, "water use requires a tremendous amount of energy," said the president of the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, and Security. As the U.S. tries to lower its dependence on foreign oil by producing more energy from domestic sources such as ethanol, it is running low on fresh water. Water is needed for mining coal, drilling for oil, refining gasoline, generating and distributing electricity, and disposing waste. According to a water-

management expert at the Sandia National Laboratory, more than 40 percent of the water withdrawn from rivers, lakes, and wells is used for energy. The rest goes mainly for irrigation. Most of the water used for energy is returned to its source, but by then it is often heated or polluted and of lesser value. As a result, “increased use of brackish or degraded water may be required in some areas,” the Energy Department warned Congress in a report last year. Conversely, a lot of energy is needed to pump, transport, treat, and distribute water. For example, the California State Water Project, which pumps water over the Tehachapi Mountains to the Los Angeles Basin, is “the largest single use of energy in California,” the president of the Pacific Institute said. Most historic battles over water have come from the demands of agriculture for scarce supplies in arid regions. But the energy sector’s needs are beginning to affect water policy and vice versa. The president cited these examples: The Tennessee Valley Authority had to reduce the output from a nuclear power plant to avoid overheating the Tennessee River. London rejected a proposed water-desalinization plant because it would use too much energy. Amsterdam had to build wind turbines to generate energy before it could build a desalinization plant in the Netherlands. One difficulty is that there is no high-level authority to coordinate energy and water usage. At least 20 federal agencies and a multitude of state and local governments have a hand in the matter.

Source:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080316/NEWS07/803160652>

23. *March 16, Associated Press* – (National) **More testing for drugs in water sought.** Test it, study it, figure out how to clean it – but still drink it. That is the range of reactions raining down from community leaders, utilities, environmental groups, and policy makers in reaction to an Associated Press investigation that documented the presence of pharmaceuticals in major portions of the nation’s drinking water supplies. A five-month-long inquiry by the AP National Investigative Team found that many communities do not test for the presence of drugs in drinking water, and those that do often fail to tell customers that they have found trace amounts of medications, including antibiotics, anti-convulsants, mood stabilizers, and sex hormones. The stories also detailed the growing concerns among scientists that such pollution is adversely affecting wildlife and may be threatening human health. As a result, Senate hearings have been scheduled, and there have been calls for federal solutions. But officials in many cities say they are not going to wait for guidance from Washington to begin testing. Pharmaceutical industry officials said they would launch a new initiative Monday with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service focused on telling Americans how to safely dispose of unused medicines.

Source:

<http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5h7s6c6vCM07zaF8wQ4mLn6I2F6ewD8VENFK00>

24. *March 16, Associated Press* – (National) **Drugs in water supply on agenda as toxicologists meet in Seattle.** Pharmaceuticals in the water supply, melamine in the pet food, a warning against giving young children cough medicine. As 7,000 scientists and regulators from 45 countries gather in Seattle this week, those are some of the top issues on the agenda, along with contamination in Puget Sound. Scientists have known for several years that pharmaceuticals were entering the water, president of the Society of

Toxicology said, and the Society of Toxicology found the issue important enough to discuss it at its annual meeting last year. But publicity surrounding the recent Associated Press report has created a buzz for this year's meeting.

Source: http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/6420ap_wa_toxicologists_meeting.html

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Public Health and Healthcare Sector

25. *March 17, Associated Press* – (International) **5 years after SARS, Hong Kong chooses caution, closing schools amid flu outbreak.** China's Food and Health Secretary called a sudden late-night news conference last week to order more than half a million kindergarten and grade school students to stay home for two weeks. Earlier that same day, he had told reporters there would be no need for such a move. Given Hong Kong's history of being hit by new infectious diseases, such as the H5N1 bird flu virus and SARS, the secretary chose the 'better safe than sorry' path amid new bird flu outbreaks in mainland China and world fears that a flu pandemic could start. The school closing was the boldest public health decision Hong Kong has made since SARS hit in 2003, and a health official said Monday that the outbreak has not yet peaked as more people continue to fall ill.

Source: <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2008/03/17/asia/AS-MED-Hong-Kong-Flu-Outbreak.php>

26. *March 17, World Poultry* – (International) **Bird flu discovered in Edinburgh** It has been reported that bird flu has been detected at a farm in Edinburgh, Scotland. Tests routinely carried out on the farm showed signs of the virus in several birds at Easter Norton Farm, near Edinburgh Airport, reported News Scotsman. Veterinary experts believe that the strain is not the deadly highly pathogenic H5N1 strain. Secondary tests are currently being carried out by the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs in an effort to confirm the reports.

Source:

http://www.worldpoultry.net/news/id2205-40487/bird_flu_discovered_in_edinburgh.html

27. *March 17, Los Angeles Times* – (National) **FDA standards for generics are questioned.** In carrying out its mission to ensure that generic drugs are "the same medicine" with "the same results" as the pioneer drugs they follow, the Food and Drug Administration rigidly applies a standard of what is called "bioequivalence." Measured in laboratories and in simple, small-scale human trials, a generic must deliver the same active ingredient to the bloodstream of patients in virtually the same amount at virtually the same rate as the pioneer drug. The FDA considers "bioequivalence" a good surrogate for "therapeutic equivalence" – the equal ability of two drug formulations to ease symptoms or cure disease. Physicians and pharmacologists say that for some copycat drugs, showing bioequivalence to the original is not proof enough that the "same medicine" will yield "the same results." However, drug experts say there are several potential flaws in the FDA's standards of comparison. First, the agency's tolerance for variance in the content and release of a drug's active ingredient – the

healing compound – may be too broad. Second, the FDA does not demand realistic trials of different formulations in large patient populations. Third, by measuring a generic medication's ability to deliver a drug compound to the bloodstream, the FDA may be looking in the wrong place. Most drugs work not in the blood but in organs, cells, or tissue elsewhere.

Source:

<http://www.latimes.com/features/health/medicine/la-he-genericside17mar17,1,7464540.story>

28. *March 16, Associated Press* – (International) **China confirms outbreak of bird flu.**

Chinese officials have confirmed that bird flu was to blame for killing chickens in poultry markets in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, Hong Kong's health bureau Sunday. China's Ministry of Agriculture notified the administration that the birds tested positive for the H5N1 bird flu virus, marking the country's fifth outbreak among poultry this year, Hong Kong's Food and Health Bureau said in a statement. The Ministry of Agriculture also said on its Web site that last week's outbreak in Guangzhou killed 114 birds and resulted in the slaughter of 518 others. But it has been contained, the ministry said. China raises more poultry than any other country worldwide and has already reported three human bird flu deaths this year.

Source:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080316/ap_on_he_me/china_bird_flu;_ylt=AvFHck3.e3GPk4m2q8JS9vys0NUE

29. *March 16, Imperial Valley News* – (International) **FDA on path to establish offices in China.**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has received approval from the U.S. State Department to establish eight full time permanent FDA positions at U.S. diplomatic posts in the People's Republic of China, pending authorization from the Chinese government. This is an important step forward in the FDA's plans to hire and place FDA staff in China over the next 18 months. In addition, the FDA will be hiring five local Chinese nationals to work with the new FDA staff at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulates General in Shanghai and Guangzhou. Building the FDA's capacity outside of the United States supports the agency's "Beyond our Borders" initiative. The initiative facilitates the building of stronger cooperative relationships with the FDA's counterpart agencies around the world and enhanced technical cooperation with foreign regulators. The permanent overseas offices in China will also allow greater access for inspections and greater interactions with manufacturers to help assure that products that are shipped to the United States meet U.S. standards for safety and manufacturing quality.

Source:

http://www.imperialvalleynews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1062&Itemid=2

Government Facilities Sector

30. *March 15, Times-Herald* – (California) **Anthrax scare at city's courthouse.** Vallejo

emergency officials combed the Vallejo courthouse for suspicious substances Friday after an anonymous caller said anthrax had been planted in the building, police said. The caller left a message on a Vallejo Police Department desk phone about 8:40 a.m. stating his friend was supposed to go to court on Friday and had placed anthrax bottles or vials in the courthouse, said Solano County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman. "No evidence of anthrax or anything suspicious was found," the spokeswoman said. As a precaution, all garbage cans were emptied and the trash was incinerated, she added.

Source: http://www.timesheraldonline.com/todaysnews/ci_8584928

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Emergency Services Sector

31. *March 17, Courier Leader* – (Michigan) **County's 9-1-1 surcharge request denied.**

Funding for the county's 911 Emergency Service program may be in jeopardy. A Van Buren County, Michigan, commissioner reported Tuesday to his fellow commissioners that the Public Service Commission had denied Van Buren County's plan to assess a \$1.17 surcharge on all communication service providers beginning July 1, 2008. The Board of Commissioners had approved the county-wide surcharge following the enactment of Michigan's Public Act 164 of 2007, which allows for the creation of a surcharge on all communication service providers that access 9-1-1. Under this new legislation, the county could spread the cost for 9-1-1 services equally to all communication devices, including cellular phones, wireless communication, and interconnected Voice over Internet devices. According to a county administrator, the Public Service Commission denied without explanation all 43 counties that had submitted plans for the recovery of costs lost through cell phone 9-1-1-useage. He said the Public Service Commission would allow Van Buren County to assess a surcharge of only 41 cents per communication device, which the official estimated would cover about 23 percent of the 9-1-1 program's cost.

Source:

http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=19398668&BRD=2188&PAG=461&dept_id=414962&rfi=6

32. *March 17, Morning Call* – (Pennsylvania) **Firefighters train to the top of the ladder.**

The volunteers in the Lower Macungie Fire Department still have found time and energy to obtain extra certifications that few other area departments have acquired. After receiving the state fire commissioner's highest training honor in 2007, the department this year has become the only Lehigh County fire department to complete the state Department of Health's advanced rescue certification program. The latest certification means the Lower Macungie Fire Department is trained to perform specialized rescue tasks, such as extrication from vehicles and trenches, and rescue missions involving hazardous materials. The certification program has three levels. The department reached the highest level, "advanced."

Source: <http://www.mcall.com/news/local/all-b1-5lmfd.6312607mar17,0,6728229.story?track=rss>

33. *March 17, Eagle-Tribune* – (Massachusetts) **Haverhill’s new emergency command center almost ready; City launches disaster survival Web site.** The police chief of Haverhill, Massachusetts, is also serving as the city’s emergency management director, and the final touches are being put on Haverhill’s new crisis headquarters in a spacious first-floor room in the police station. The center is expected to be fully operational in May. The emergency management director is charged with updating and developing plans that will allow the city to provide essential services to citizens in the event of natural disasters ranging from large fires, floods, and extreme weather to hazardous chemical spills, terrorist attacks, and disease outbreaks. A new Web site was launched, detailing the city’s emergency plans and tips for surviving a disaster. The site, which is on the city’s home page, includes links to other sites that provide information about local utility companies, mass transportation, and extreme weather such as snowstorms, thunderstorms, hurricanes, and drought.
- Source: http://www.eagletribune.com/punewshh/local_story_077053034.html?keyword=secondarystory
34. *March 17, Daily Item* – (Massachusetts) **Peabody to hold terrorist response tabletop exercise drill Thursday.** The mayor of Peabody, Massachusetts, and the Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council announced the completion of the “Southern Essex Regional Area Planning Council” daylong tabletop exercise drill hosted by Peabody on Thursday morning. The drill, moderated by Precision Planning and Simulations, Inc., was designed to help determine the North Shore’s ability to respond to hypothetical terrorist attacks by exploring key emergency response roles and communications protocols. Over 15 North Shore communities participated in the exercise, including members of the Peabody Police and Fire Department, as well as Peabody Emergency Management officials. Thursday’s drill took place at Peabody’s Department of Public Works. It focused on the decision-making and communication skills of emergency response professionals when confronted with a complex set of scenarios involving transportation, health, evacuations, chemical explosions, and terrorism.
- Source: <http://www.thedailyitemoflynn.com/articles/2008/03/17/news/news15.txt>
35. *March 15, Greenwich Time* – (Connecticut) **Emergency safety check: Response guidelines changed to cut accidents.** In an effort to cut down on unwarranted high speed responses and the accidents that can result, fire commanders in Greenwich, Connecticut, have adopted new guidelines on how many fire trucks need to race to some fire and emergency calls. “The goal is to cut down on unnecessary high speed responses,” the Greenwich assistant chief said. “If you look at a lot of the departments around the country, they are limiting the number of additional apparatus which are responding at high speed.” The department will evaluate whether the new guidelines being followed has any impact on reducing accidents. Fire engines are sent to calls in two different ways in Greenwich, Code 10 and Code 20, the assistant chief said. During Code 10 calls, the engine drives with the flow of traffic without lights and sirens, while a Code 20 involves activating sirens and driving at high speed. Under federal law, a minimum of four firefighters must be at the scene of a fire before firefighting efforts

begin.

Source: <http://www.greenwichtime.com/news/local/scn-gt-firetrucksmar15,0,2990828.story>

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Information Technology

36. *March 17, IDG News Service* – (International) **Google News, YouTube blocked in China amid Tibet riots.** Beijing appears to have taken a page out of Myanmar's playbook by blocking some Internet access amid rioting in Tibet that has already seen as many as 80 people killed, according to the Tibetan government in exile. China has blocked access to Google News and YouTube in an apparent attempt to stop the spread of video footage related the rioting going on in several cities in Tibet, including the capital Lhasa. Demonstrations in the city started on March 10, a day commemorating the anniversary of a 1959 uprising against Chinese rule after which the spiritual leader of the country, the Dalai Lama, fled to India. China's decision to block access to the sites follows similar government censorship of protests by Myanmar. Last September, Myanmar cut off Internet access entirely to block people from viewing pictures and videos or sending them out of the country. Two videos about the situations in Tibet posted on YouTube by the user Amdo2007 both appear to show peaceful demonstrations. The first shows a public gathering, including Tibetan monks in their distinctive saffron robes, while the second video shows what appears to be peaceful marching. Some videos, including one from Amdo2007, have been "flagged by YouTube's user Community" so that users have to verify they are 18 or older by logging in or signing up. The video shows bodies on the streets, protesters throwing rocks at Chinese army vehicles, and other images. It may have the most hits, over 80,000 so far, on the subject.

Source:

http://www.infoworld.com/article/08/03/17/Google-News-YouTube-blocked-in-China-amid-Tibet-riots_1.html

37. *March 17, USA Today* – (National) **Botnet scams are exploding.** Largely unnoticed by the public, botnets have come to inundate the Internet. On a typical day, 40 percent of the 800 million computers connected to the Internet are bots engaged in distributing e-mail spam, stealing sensitive data typed at banking and shopping websites, bombarding websites as part of extortionist denial-of-service attacks, and spreading fresh infections, says the CEO of Support Intelligence, a San Francisco-based company that tracks and sells threat data. The botnet problem shows no sign of easing. Security firm Damballa pinpointed 7.3 million unique instances of bots carrying out nefarious activities on an average day in January - an astronomical leap from a daily average of 333,000 in August 2006. That included botnet-delivered spam, which accounted for 91 percent of all e-mails in early March, up from 64 percent last June, says e-mail management firm Cloudmark. The upshot of this deluge is profound, if not immediately obvious, says Adam Cloudmark's director of emerging technology. Telecoms and Internet service providers must absorb the cost of carrying botnet traffic; they can be expected to pass that expense onto companies and consumers, he says. Meanwhile, tens of millions of

botted computer users are experiencing degraded performance with no clue why. Beyond that, cybercrime gangs are stockpiling enough stolen data to fuel identity theft scams for years to come. Meanwhile, law enforcement is negligible, and security protections for consumers and businesses remain, at best, patchwork and haphazardly deployed, says a computer science professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Source:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/usatoday/20080317/tc_usatoday/botnetscamsareexploding:_ylt=AvcKp_DTaaXjiyj2FdVFM2iDzdAF

Internet Alert Dashboard

To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at soc@us-cert.gov or visit their Website: <http://www.us-cert.gov>.

Information on IT information sharing and analysis can be found at the IT ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center) Website: <https://www.it-isac.org/>.

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Communications Sector

38. *March 16, Associated Press* – (National) **Wireless firms fight FCC on cell-tower backup-power rules.** When Hurricane Katrina assaulted the Gulf Coast in 2005, wind and flooding knocked out hundreds of cell towers and cell sites, silencing wireless communication exactly when emergency crews and victims needed it. To avoid similar debacles in the future, the Federal Communications Commission wants most cell-transmitter sites in the U.S. to have at least eight hours of backup power in case power fails, one of several moves regulators say will make the nation's communication system more reliable. Two and a half years after Katrina and eight months after the FCC's regulations were released, the two sides are still wrestling with the issue. A federal appeals court in Washington recently put the regulations on hold while it considers an appeal by some in the wireless industry. Several cell-phone companies, while agreeing that their networks need to become more resilient, have opposed the FCC's backup-power regulations, claiming they were illegally drafted and would present a huge economic and bureaucratic burden. There are almost 210,000 cell towers and roof-mounted cell sites in the U.S., and carriers have said many would require modification. At least one industry estimate puts the per-site price tag at up to \$15,000. Sprint Nextel Corp. told the FCC the rules would lead to "staggering and irreparable harm" for the company.

Source: <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/technology/orl-cell1608mar16,0,3379047.story>

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Commercial Facilities Sector

39. *March 16, Associated Press* – (Georgia) **Tornado damage hurts Atlanta business.** Crews on Sunday cleaned up the Atlanta's tornado-ravaged downtown as officials at

hotels wondered when the shuttered convention center would reopen and bring back the millions of dollars in revenue it helps generate. The city's main convention center — which includes the 3.9 million square-foot convention center, the Georgia Dome and Centennial Olympic Park — and two major hotels were hobbled just as the convention season began. The tornado ripped through the roof of an exhibition hall in one building, leaving light fixtures and awnings dangling and exposed as workers continued to clear the scattered debris littering the facility. "The critical part is what you can't see," the executive director of the center said of the damage. At the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, a 735-foot cylinder of glass and steel that has long been an Atlanta icon and is billed as the tallest hotel in the western hemisphere, about 100 guest room windows were blown out by the storm. The damage was worse at The Omni Hotel at CNN Center, located in the same corridor as the CNN Center and the Georgia World Congress Center.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-03-16-atlanta-hotels_N.htm?csp=15

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National Monuments & Icons Sector

40. *March 16, Associated Press* – (Washington) **State's national parks reel from storm damage.** Winter storms have battered the Pacific Northwest's national parks each of the past two years, with damages in the millions of dollars. After last year's massive repairs to Mount Rainier National Park, the latest victim is Olympic National Park. Volunteer crews are making the park the focus of their efforts this year – though workers at Mount Rainier and North Cascades national parks also are furiously repairing fractures to roads and trails left from winter storms. The Elwha River overran its banks, flooding campgrounds. Slides swept away parts of the Hurricane Ridge Road in three places, and just one lane now leads to the observation point with views of Mount Olympus and other jagged peaks. Total damages have been estimated at more than \$4 million. That is on top of the \$5 million still being spent on last year's storms. Construction on those repairs should finish up this month. Other areas may remain closed for the near future, including the main access point in the southwest corner which suffered extensive damage in numerous places.
- Source: http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/355257_parks17.html
41. *March 16, Associated Press* – (Arizona) **Meetings scheduled to discuss proposed copper mine.** Three public meetings have been scheduled for this week to discuss environmental impacts of a proposed open-pit copper mine 30 miles south of Tucson. Attempting to answer questions about the proposed mine will be officials of the Coronado National Forest, SWCA Environmental Consultants – a private firm hired by the Forest Service to work on the environmental impact statement – and officials with Rosemont Mining Co. The U.S. Forest Service scheduled the meetings, during which officials will discuss the agency's process for initiating a required environmental-impact statement for the proposal. A lengthy public comment period will follow the public meetings, officials said. Rosemont Mining Co. wants to develop the mine on 995 acres it owns in the Santa Rita Mountains. If approved, the mine would spill over onto 3,670 acres of the Coronado National Forest, 15 acres of land managed by the federal Bureau

of Land Management, and 75 acres of State Trust land.

Source: <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/0316mine0316.html>

42. *March 15, Associated Press* – (New Hampshire) **Police say pipe bombs found at historic fort.** Police say two explosive devices found in an old bunker this week were pipe bombs filled with gunpowder. The bombs were found Wednesday at Fort Stark, New Hampshire, which protected Portsmouth Harbor during the Revolutionary War. Authorities say it could be a few weeks before the remnants of the detonated bombs are analyzed at the state crime lab.

Source:

http://www.boston.com/news/local/new_hampshire/articles/2008/03/15/police_say_pipe_bombs_found_at_historic_fort/

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Dams Sector

43. *March 15, TWEAN 9 Albany* – (New York) **Security sufficient at Conklingville Dam.** Security at the Conklingville Dam has been deemed more than sufficient following an attempted break-in earlier this month. Members of the Board of the Hudson River visited the Conklingville Dam to inspect the grounds as part of an effort to verify the security at the dam. In addition to surveying present security measures, board members discussed where they planned to position the newly purchased video cameras and other security enhancements.

Source:

http://capitalnews9.com/content/top_stories/112366/security-sufficient-at-conklingville-dam/Default.aspx

44. *March 15, Centre Daily Times* – (Pennsylvania) **Dam may be unsafe.** The state has put Philipsburg's Cold Stream Dam on the unsafe dam list, saying its spillway is not adequate to handle a catastrophic flood – a change that leaves the borough with few options, all of them unappealing and most of them costly. The borough engineer said the designation is based on the assessment of whether the dam could withstand what is termed a “probable maximum flood event.” But he said under new methodology the state is using, a maximum flood event was calculated to be 30 inches of rain falling over a 24-hour period. The Department of Environmental Protection spokesman said data from inspections led to the determination that there was not an adequate spillway to make sure homes and businesses downstream would be protected in such a situation. An evaluation of the dam must be completed annually because it is classified as a high hazard structure.

Source: <http://www.centredaily.com/116/story/466501.html>

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